

Allowing VIA board to repeal tax exemption for telecommunications services

SB 1705 by Wentworth (Martinez Fischer)

DIGEST:	SB 1705 would have allowed the governing board of VIA Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) in Bexar County to repeal a sales and use tax exemption for telecommunications services if the repeal was approved by a committee of San Antonio city council members, county commissioners, and mayors of smaller municipalities. Reinstating the exemption would have required approval in the same manner. If the exemption was repealed, revenue collection would have been tolled during the period in which the MTA board obtained tax receipts for an advanced transportation district.
GOVERNOR'S REASON FOR VETO:	“Current law allows metropolitan transit authorities (MTAs) to tax telecommunications services if approved by each city that created the authority. Senate Bill No. 1705 would make it easier for VIA MTA in San Antonio to tax telecommunications services by taking the decision away from smaller cities and allowing the City of San Antonio and Bexar County to make the decision. This bill is unnecessary because voters will have an opportunity to approve a sales tax for an advanced transportation district, as proposed in Senate Bill No. 404 [by Madla], which I already have signed into law.”
RESPONSE:	<p>Sen Jeff Wentworth, author of SB 1705, was unavailable for comment.</p> <p>Rep. Trey Martinez Fischer, the House sponsor, said: “A bipartisan effort of the Bexar County House and Senate delegation, SB 1705 was developed to provide the metropolitan transit authority which serves San Antonio and environs immediate access to the same revenues that all other transit systems in Texas have. SB 1705 would have enabled the San Antonio transit system to access revenues from the telecommunications area, which was not a source in SB 404. SB 1705 would have enabled the San Antonio transit system to immediately make needed improvements to provide for those elderly and disabled who depend on public transportation.”</p>
NOTES:	SB 1705 passed the House on the Local, Consent, and Resolutions Calendar and was not analyzed in a <i>Daily Floor Report</i> .